

greenhouse gas emissions. We must rapidly expand the production of clean, alternative fuels and increase energy efficiency. Our country has lost momentum due to the Bush-Cheney White House's inaction on global warming and energy independence. The new Congress will change course today.

A healthy and clean environment and renewable energy solutions are vital to the State of Florida and the Tampa Bay area. In my Tampa Bay area district, we are working to increase energy efficiency through organizations like the Clean Energy Research Center at the University of South Florida. My recent Tampa energy forum "Turning Green for the Red, White and Blue" drew great community interest. Our neighbors now are focusing on commonsense conservation initiatives. Nevertheless, leadership at the Federal level is vital.

The Energy and Water Appropriations bill invests \$3 billion in global climate change science and in renewable energy technologies that both reduce greenhouse gases and help our Nation meet its energy needs. Additionally, this bill will provide a 50 percent increase into research on energy efficiency and renewable energy, including solar, biofuels, hydropower, and geothermal, as well as new vehicle technology and energy efficient buildings and homes. Solar energy holds great promise for Floridians and I strongly support the new investment of \$200 million for research, development and demonstration projects to make solar energy more affordable.

On the first day of the new Congress, the House passed legislation to repeal \$14 billion in taxpayer subsidies given to Big Oil companies that are earning record profits while we pay record profits at the pump. Those monies now will be channeled into clean alternative energy technologies and energy efficiency. Doing so enhances our national security as our country will lessen its foreign entanglements with questionable, petrocentric nations.

Climate change is potentially the greatest threat to our national security and prosperity. Energy independence is vital to our future. I urge the Congress to act swiftly for the sake of my community and all Americans.

INTRODUCING THE FAIR BALANCE PRESCRIPTION DRUG ADVERTISING ACT

HON. FORTNEY PETE STARK

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 21, 2007

Mr. STARK. Madam Speaker, I rise today to introduce the Fair Balance Prescription Drug Advertisement Act. This bill would place long overdue restrictions on direct-to-consumer, DTC, prescription drug advertisements. All too often, these poorly regulated ads provide incomplete and misleading information about new pills, pushing unnecessary prescriptions and promoting drugs before doctors and scientists have time to learn enough about their dangers.

Consumers, at whom these ads are targeted, don't realize that FDA approves drugs without confirming that they are safe for every treatment circumstance. As a result, many new drugs are widely marketed before the FDA discovers serious side effects and takes corrective action. Examples include drugs for

conditions as common as arthritis and high blood sugar.

As scientists have discovered, "DTCA (direct to consumer advertising) is a successful method of generating prescriptions." Since ad restrictions were gutted in the U.S., drug advertising has grown at a startling rate, to a whopping \$4.2 billion in 2005. No surprise, drug costs have grown dramatically as well, from 78 billion in 1997 to more than 2 trillion in 2005. Pharmaceutical companies spend billions of dollars trying to convince consumers their drugs will fix everything from bad sex lives to bad moods. These ads lead consumers to demand drugs that may not be medically necessary or appropriate for their condition.

In many instances, DTC ads promote drugs that are later found to harm patients. In 2003, for example, Johnson & Johnson ran ads where Procrit seemed to rescue a cancer victim from disabling lethargy. Then new research came out showing cancer patients did no better on Procrit. In fact, some cancer patients actually did worse.

The FDA has now given Procrit a black box warning cautioning against the use of this drug in certain circumstances. The agency has also warned Johnson & Johnson and Amgen that there is no evidence to support marketing efforts suggesting the drug reduces fatigue for patients in chemotherapy.

By increasing demand for pricey new drugs when cheaper ones will do, DTC advertising also drives up the costs of prescriptions. Sadly when patients find they can't afford these expensive drugs, they skip doses or don't even start the treatment. Unbalanced ads for expensive pills therefore contribute to both higher costs and to poor control of chronic disease.

The Fair Balance Prescription Drug Advertisement Act will empower the FDA to determine whether pharmaceutical companies present information about their products in a fair manner, balancing risks and benefits. Any advertisements found to violate this standard would be denied currently allowed business expense tax deductions for advertising costs.

Based on recommendations from the Institute of Medicine, the bill goes one step further and eliminates the business exemption for all new medications for the first 2 years that they are in the marketplace. This provision would provide doctors and scientists the opportunity to learn more about drugs' effects on a general population before consumers are bombarded with marketing pitches. Had this regulation been in effect when Procrit was introduced, many people would be better off today.

There are freedom of speech concerns with directly prohibiting advertising, accurate or not. This legislation therefore takes a different approach, hitting drug companies where it hurts them most, their bottom lines. While companies could continue running misleading ads, they would have to pay significantly more to do so. This will discourage drug companies from engaging in dishonest marketing practices.

The Fair Balance Prescription Drug Advertisement Act sets forth new guidelines that will help the pharmaceutical industry appropriately educate the public, enabling consumers to make informed decisions based on a fair and balanced presentation of risks and benefits. Today's DTC ads simply don't meet that standard. Given rapidly rising health care and

prescription drug costs, we need to take every step we can to make prescription drugs safer and more affordable. We have to make sure advertisements aid consumers in making informed decisions, rather than simply increasing demand for the newest drugs.

Since the pharmaceutical industry already argues that their ads inform consumers, they should have nothing to fear from this bill. We should pass this bill immediately and take a concrete step to improve the safety and efficacy of prescription drugs for America's consumers. I urge all my colleagues to join me in support of the Fair Balance Prescription Drug Advertisement Act.

TRIBUTE TO THELMA BERTIE

HON. JOSEPH CROWLEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 21, 2007

Mr. CROWLEY. Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to one of my constituents, Ms. Thelma Bertie of the Bronx, NY, and to recognize her on the celebration of her 90th birthday. Ms. Bertie is an 87-year resident of New York and has exhibited steadfast commitment to American ideals by faithfully voting in every local and national election since reaching voting age. I commend her on this great dedication to her civic duty and I wish her a joyous day with many more happy moments ahead beside her loved ones.

Ms. Bertie has asserted herself as an active and conscientious citizen and has earned appreciation for her contributions to the community. Her life and accomplishments are true inspirations to the lives of all those she touches and I am honored that my district is called home by such an outstanding citizen. Ms. Bertie truly understands the value of being not only a New Yorker but an American as well, and the entire Bronx community is privileged to count her among its residents.

Madam Speaker, I join to congratulate Ms. Bertie on this birthday milestone and I wish her good health and fortune in the future.

CONGRATULATING LANCE CORPORAL WILLIAM BURKE JR.

HON. THOMAS G. TANCREDI

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 21, 2007

Mr. TANCREDI. Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to one of my constituents, LCpl William Burke Jr.

Lance Corporal Burke recently returned from Haditha, Iraq, where he served a 7-month deployment. He was assigned to Company E of the Second Battalion, Third Marine Regiment of the United States Marine Corps.

The city of Haditha saw unprecedented improvements when Lance Corporal Burke's Company E served. Upon arrival, Haditha was considered one of the most dangerous regions in Iraq. By the end of Lance Corporal Burke's deployment, the police force was rapidly growing, attacks on Iraqi Police and Marine patrols were steadily decreasing, and relations with the Iraqi people were improving.

Madam Speaker, please join me in paying tribute to Lance Corporal Burke, whose selfless actions benefit all Americans. Our Nation